

# HELP WANTED:

Highlights from the  
Fourth Quarter, 2004  
Louisiana Job Vacancy Survey

## Houma Regional Findings

Louisiana Department of Labor  
Developed by the Research & Statistics Division  
for the Office of Workforce Development



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# WHERE are the vacancies?

## Houma Vacancies by Occupational Group

Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Employment in Occupation	Percent Requiring More than a High School Diploma	Percent Requiring at Least Some Work Experience	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Construction & Extraction	448	7,490	0.0%	100.0%	\$12.00
Transportation & Material Moving	310	11,400	21.7%	91.4%	\$23.00
Sales & Related	284	8,680	5.3%	92.5%	\$5.50
Food Preparation & Serving Related	186	6,030	6.3%	64.5%	\$5.15
Office & Administrative Support	151	12,260	0.0%	98.8%	\$6.75
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	116	4,890	100.0%	23.3%	\$8.00
Healthcare Support	101	1,850	100.0%	0.0%	\$6.20
Production	81	8,540	0.0%	100.0%	\$14.00
Community & Social Services	74	930	0.0%	95.9%	\$9.13
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	34	400	NA	100.0%	\$12.00
Architecture & Engineering	23	840	84.5%	100.0%	\$22.00
Personal Care & Service	11	1,340	0.0%	100.0%	\$6.50
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	8	5,170	0.0%	100.0%	\$18.50
Management	8	3,990	100.0%	100.0%	\$27.11
Computer & Mathematical Science	2	250	100.0%	100.0%	\$20.00
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	0	2,290	NA	NA	NA
Business & Financial Operations	0	1,820	NA	NA	NA
Education, Training & Library	0	6,320	NA	NA	NA
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	270	NA	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	280	NA	NA	NA
Legal	0	220	NA	NA	NA
Protective Service	0	1,340	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total, All Occupational Groups</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>86,600</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>\$8.00</b>

## Job titles with many openings

Structural Iron and Steel Workers – 315 openings  
 Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs – 157 openings  
 Retail Salespersons – 134 openings  
 Cashiers – 120 openings  
 Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants – 101 openings  
 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses – 90 openings  
 Waiters and Waitresses – 90 openings  
 Helpers – Electricians – 80 openings  
 Sailors and Marine Oilers – 72 openings  
 Machinists – 69 openings  
 Customer Service Representatives – 69 openings

## Houma Vacancies by Industry Group

Industry Group	Number of Vacancies	Industry Employment	Vacancy Rate	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	347	21,533	1.6%	\$6.95
Construction	318	5,391	5.9%	\$10.00
Education & Health Services	308	18,793	1.6%	\$8.00
Leisure & Hospitality	294	6,714	4.4%	\$5.50
Financial Activities	206	5,435	3.8%	\$14.00
Professional & Business Services	167	8,273	2.0%	\$12.00
Manufacturing	158	8,883	1.8%	\$10.00
Information	26	985	2.6%	\$7.50
Other Services	12	2,154	0.6%	\$10.33
Natural Resources & Mining	0	6,427	0.0%	NA
<b>Total, All Industry Groups</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>84,588</b>	<b>2.20%</b>	<b>\$8.00</b>

## WHAT do these numbers mean ?

There were 1,836 job vacancies in the Houma Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA 3), for a vacancy rate of 2.2 percent. This means that for every 100 jobs, approximately two were vacant at the time of the survey. The Construction & Extraction occupational group had the highest number of vacancies (448), comprising approximately 25 percent of all reported openings. The Transportation and Material Moving occupational group took second place in the number of vacancies (310) for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004 survey.

The Trade, Transportation & Utilities industry group had the largest number of vacancies (347), accounting for 19 percent of the vacancies in this survey. Two of the occupational groups with a large number of vacancies can be found in this industry group: Transportation & Material Moving and Sales & Related.

Education and experience requirements varied widely across occupational groups. Many of the occupational groups did not require more than a high school diploma, while Computer & Mathematical Science, Management, Healthcare Practitioner & Technical, and Healthcare Support occupational groups had the largest percentage of job vacancies requiring more than a high school diploma. Most of the job vacancies require at least some work experience. Wages varied by occupation from a median wage of \$5.15 per hour for Food Preparation & Serving Related to a median wage of \$27.11 for Management. Median hourly wage for all occupational groups was \$8.00.

# A SNAPSHOT

## of Houma job vacancies

### How are experience, education and pay related?

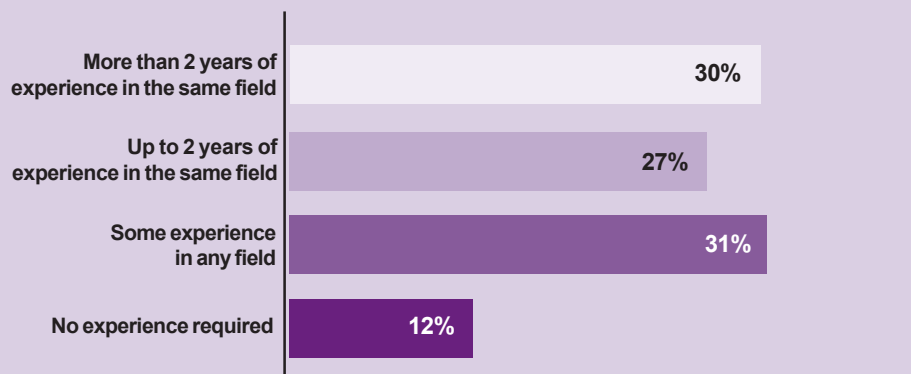
Tenure is a way of identifying how experience, education and pay relate to one another. Employees with higher years of tenure usually have higher levels of education, more experience, and are paid more, while employees with less education and experience find themselves in low paying jobs that have more turnover. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2004 Employee Tenure report, jobs with noticeably high employee tenure included management occupations (6.0 years), architecture and engineering occupations (5.8 years), protection service occupations (5.5 years), education, training, and library occupations (5.1 years), production occupations (5.0 years), and healthcare practitioner and technical occupations (4.5 years). Jobs with somewhat low employee tenure included food preparation and serving related occupations (1.8 years), personal care and service occupations (2.7 years), sales and related occupations (2.8 years), and healthcare support occupations (2.9 years).

Overall, Houma regional employers were seeking experienced workers for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004. Approximately 88 percent of all reported vacancies required at least some previous work experience. One in 3 vacancies required some experience in any field, 27 percent required up to two years experience in the same field, and one in three vacancies required more than two years of experience in the same field.

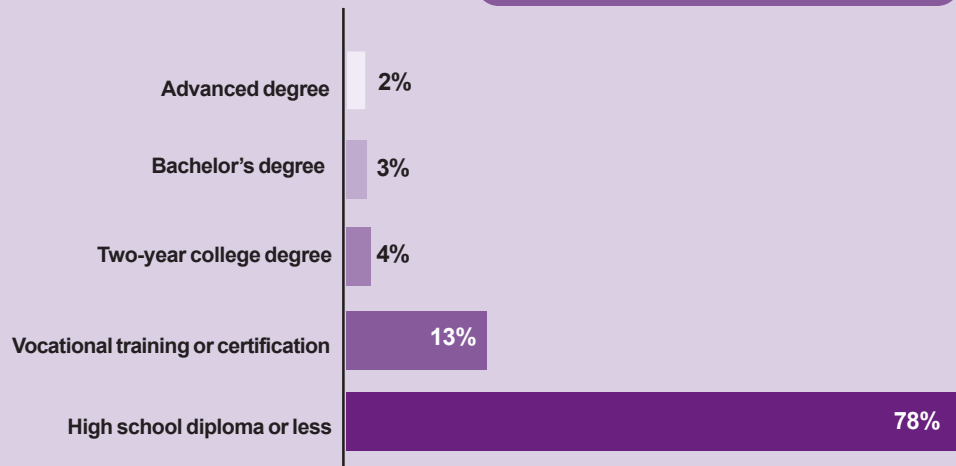
Only 5 percent of Houma are job vacancies required a four-year college degree or higher. Three percent required a bachelor's degree, while two percent required an advanced degree. Educational attainment of a high school diploma or less was required by 78 percent of the job vacancies reported. Four percent of the vacancies required a two-year college degree and 13 percent of the vacancies required vocational training or certification.

The majority of the job vacancies paid from \$5.16 to \$10.00 per hour, with the largest share of vacancies (30%) paying \$7.01 to \$10.00, and the second largest share (25%) paying \$5.16 to \$7.00. Thirteen out of 100 job vacancies paid \$5.15 per hour or less, while five out of 100 job vacancies paid over \$16.00.

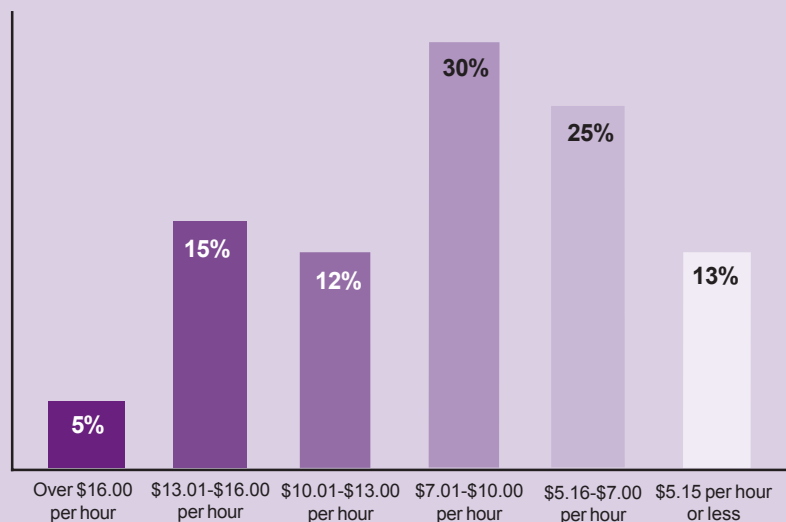
### How much experience do Houma job vacancies require?



### How much education do Houma job vacancies require?



### How much do Houma job vacancies pay?



### What is the difference between an *industry* and an *occupation*?

An industry is a group of establishments, categorized according to the goods or services they provide. For purposes of this study, many of the industry sectors are grouped together to provide summary information. For instance, the industry sectors of Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities are combined to form a summary industry group called Trade, Transportation & Utilities.

An occupational group is a group of workers, categorized according to the skills they have and what they do on the job. For example, Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations is one occupational group that includes many different types of occupations such as Dentists, Optometrists, Therapists, Veterinarians, Diagnostic related Technologists and Technicians, and Medical Records and Health Information Technicians. These are just a few of the occupations you can find in this occupational group.

Each industry contains a variety of occupations, and many occupations may be found in every industry. Using Healthcare Services (part of the summary industry group of Education & Health Services) as an example, you may find the following occupations in a hospital: doctors, therapists, office managers, medical records clerks, housekeepers, nurses, food preparation workers, and maintenance workers.



# What did EMPLOYERS say?

Employers' Responses to the Open-Ended Question:  
*"In trying to fill this position,  
 what is the greatest difficulty you have faced, if any?"*\*

Reported Difficulty	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<i>"We have been unable to find qualified applicants and/or qualified applicants with experience."</i>	7	15.9%
<i>"We have been unable to find applicants with the specific experience/training/skills that we are seeking."</i>	9	20.5%
<i>"There is a shortage of people in the occupation."</i>	2	4.5%
<i>"Some aspect of the job is undesirable to applicants (such as shifts, weekends, heavy lifting)."</i>	4	9.1%
<i>"The work ethic of people, once they are hired is unacceptable." This included comments on appearance, social skills, attitude, maturity, and dependability.</i>	2	4.5%
<i>"Finding people that want to work. Not enough applications submitted."</i>	8	18.2%
<i>"Relocation to this area."</i>	3	6.8%
<i>Some other difficulty mentioned.</i>	3	6.8%
<i>"No reported difficulty in filling vacancy."</i>	6	13.6%
<b>Total Responding to this Question</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>99.9%</b>

\* Confidentiality concerns precluded publishing employers' verbatim responses. However, an LDOL analyst reviewed all responses to the question above, grouped similar responses together, then re-worded the similar responses into one representative sentence or phrase, as shown above. Data shown in this table are unweighted. Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Major Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Hiring Demand Index*	Median Number of Days Position was Vacant
Architecture & Engineering	23	2.76%	Low	28
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	34	8.50%	Average	7
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Business & Financial Operations	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Community & Social Services	74	7.99%	Low	7
Computer & Mathematical Science	2	0.60%	Average	60
Construction & Extraction	448	5.99%	Average	7
Education, Training & Library	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Food Preparation & Serving Related	186	3.09%	High	4
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	116	2.37%	Low	90
Healthcare Support	101	5.44%	High	14
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	8	0.15%	Low	10
Legal	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Management	8	0.20%	Low	28
Office & Administrative Support	151	1.23%	Average	28
Personal Care & Service	11	0.78%	High	28
Production	81	0.95%	Low	28
Protective Service	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Sales & Related	284	3.27%	High	14
Transportation & Material Moving	310	2.72%	High	14
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>1,836</b>	<b>2.48%</b>		<b>21</b>

Taking all of the labor shortage indicators together (vacancy rate, the hiring demand index, and the number of days position remained vacant) there was no evidence of severe labor shortages in any occupational group. The overall vacancy rate for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004 was 2.48 percent, and positions stayed vacant for a median of 21 days, indicating that employers were able to fill a manageable number of vacancies in a reasonable amount of time. Even though four occupational groups, Food Preparation & Serving Related, Healthcare Support, Transportation & Material Moving, and Sales & Related have higher than average vacancy rates and high hiring demand index, the vacancies seem to be filled in a relatively short period of time.

\*The Hiring Demand Index indicates whether demand for workers in an occupational group is more than what we would expect from turnover levels alone. A "high" score on the Hiring Demand Index means that, all else equal, a labor shortage is **likely**, because there are more openings than we would expect to see from normal turnover alone. A "low" score means that a labor shortage is **unlikely**, because there are **not** more openings than we would expect to see from turnover alone. See the back cover of this report for more details on this measure.

Are there  
**LABOR SHORTAGES**  
 in Houma?

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fourth Quarter 2004 Job Vacancy Survey Findings are available for the state of Louisiana as well as all eight regional labor market areas (RLMAs). To order copies, or for more information, please contact the Louisiana Department of Labor's Research and Statistics Unit at (225) 342-3141, or toll-free at (888) 302-7662. You may also download any Job Vacancy Survey product from our Web site: [www.LAWORKS.net/qm\\_JVS.asp](http://www.LAWORKS.net/qm_JVS.asp).

## TECHNICAL NOTES

for the Fourth Quarter 2004  
Job Vacancy Survey

### THE SAMPLE

The Job Vacancy Survey was based on a random sample of Louisiana business establishments covered by Louisiana's unemployment insurance (UI) tax laws. The survey was conducted in a cooperative endeavor between Louisiana State University and Louisiana Department of Labor. The sample was stratified by firm size, region (including the eight regional labor market areas in Louisiana) and industry classification. This sample excludes certain types of establishments: small businesses with self-employed owners and some non-profit and religious organizations, which are not covered by UI tax laws. In addition, the sample is limited to **private employers only. The vacancies reported in this study do not include openings with any federal, state, or local government entities in Louisiana.** The total sample size was 8,139. The overall response rate for this survey was 38.7%.

### JOB VACANCY RATES

Vacancy rates are computed as the number of vacancies in an occupation divided by the total employment in that occupation. A vacancy rate of five percent means that for every 100 jobs, five were vacant at the time of the survey.

### HIRING DEMAND INDEX

The Hiring Demand Index presented in this report measures demand for labor over and above the normal demand due to turnover. This measure, first constructed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, is computed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(Job Vacancy Rate in the Occupation / Job Vacancy Rate in all occupations)} \\ & \text{divided by} \\ & \text{(Turnover rate in the occupation / Turnover rate in all occupations)} \end{aligned}$$

Job vacancy rates are calculated as discussed above, and national turnover rates were provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. They were calculated using Current Population Survey (CPS) Job Tenure Supplement microdata.

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